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ABSTRACT

This lesson focuses on the post-Reconstruction South and the social practices based on race and skin color that hindered the South's growth as a region and relegated many people to the status of second-class citizens, in spite of the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments. The lesson provides historical background and outlines a task for students to write a report on President Theodore Roosevelt's handling of the post-Reconstruction South and the Supreme Court's Plessy v. Ferguson decision. It details a small-group exercise with puzzle pieces representing southern states in which the teacher assigns roles for each student to identify, take notes, and write a solution to a specific social problem, followed by a group meeting to discuss and write a group report. The lesson also provides a list of online resources, learning advice for oral presentations, and evaluation criteria, as well as reflection questions for students to answer. It concludes with notes for the teacher about grade level, content standards, lesson purpose and goals, information literacy, length of time for class periods, and resources needed. (BT)

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Unfinished Business: Making Democracy Work for Everyone, 1877-1904

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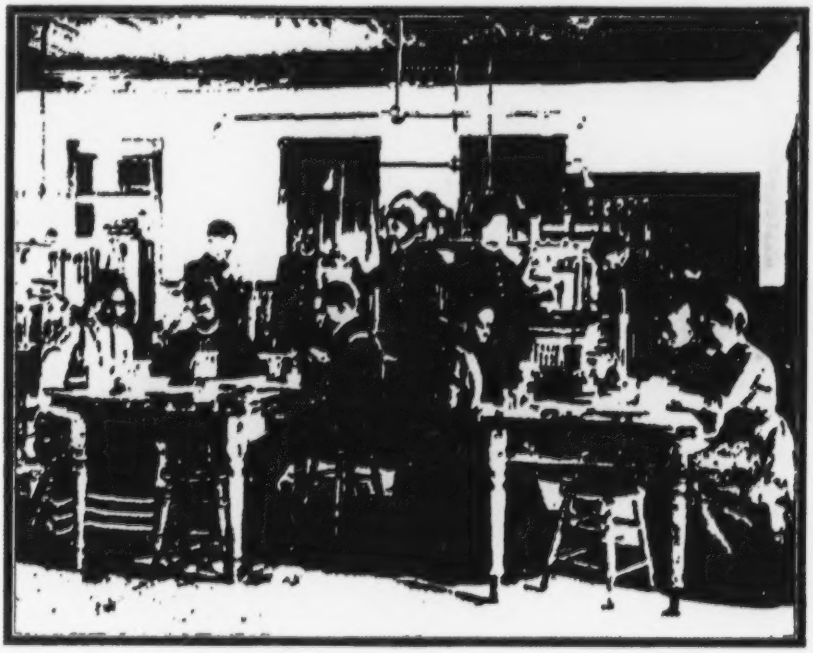
Unfinished Business:

Making Democracy Work for Everyone, 1877-1904



The post Reconstruction South witnessed a number of changes in society that helped to improve the conditions of its people; however, there were a number of practices based on race and skin color that hindered the South's growth as a region in this republic. The results of such practices were to relegate a number of its people to the status of second-class citizens in spite of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth amendments. These amendments were, for the most part, undermined by politicians of the South, along with the Civil Rights Cases of 1883 and the decision of Plessey v. Ferguson of 1896. These particular events inspired southern legislators to enact segregation laws that were complex, detailed, and unfair. Thus, the movement to eliminate poverty, racism, and inequality continued to be an ongoing and vexing problem as the nation entered the twentieth century.

The Task

The President of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt, has issued an executive order creating five All Deliberate-Speed Commissions. Each commission is made of former slaves, former slave holders, legislators, lawyers, and community leaders. The President has appointed you to a commission to study the social and political conditions of the post up Reconstruction South to the Supreme Court's decision of Plessey v. Ferguson of 1896. If you discover these conditions to be unfair, you must write a report listing the areas of inequality and a solution for eliminatingthese conditions from southern society. Also, your report should include a statement or two on how black citizens' rights as first class Americans will be respected and guaranteed in the future.

The Process

Your teacher will pass around a hat with puzzle pieces. The puzzle pieces complete a map of ten southern states that were divided into five militarydistricts during Congressional Reconstruction. Students who have puzzlepieces that represent the state of Virginia will be district/commission one.Students who have puzzle pieces that represent the states of North and South Carolina will be district/commission two. Similarly, students who have puzzle pieces that represent the states of Alabama, Georgia, and Florida will be district/commission three. Too, students who have puzzle pieces that represent the states of Arkansas and Mississippi will be district/commission four, and

students who have puzzle pieces that represent Louisiana and Texas will be district/commission five. Each district/commission is composed of five students. Within each group, your teacher will assign a role to every member from one the five broad areas: education, lynching, suffrage, segregation, and mob violence. Each of you should search the link(s) that pertain(s) to your specific area. Then, identify the problem(s), take notes of the problem(s), and write a solution to the problem. After everyone in the group has finished his/her individual report, the group will meet as a whole to discuss and write one group report.

Some general sources you should use:

- The Constitution of the United States
- The Bill of Rights
- The 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments
- State constitutions
- Plessey v. Ferguson Case of 1896 (Decision)

John Garraty, Story of America, chapters 16 and 17

Armeto, Nash, Salter and Wixson, A More Perfect Union, chapters 12 and 13.

Resources

American Memory

http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/aap/aaphome.html

African American Perspectives: Documents dealing with the broad areas of civil rights, race relations, education, segregation, lynching, suffrage, and mob violence.

Slave Voices from Duke University Special Collection Library

http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/slavery/

Archives of African American Music and Culture

http://www.indiana.edu/~aaamc/index.html

Ida B. Wells

http://inform.umd.edu/pictures/women studies/picturegallery/wells.html

Drum Web Server Home Page

http://drum.ncsc.org/

Selected Bibliography

http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/aap/aapbib.html

Learning Advice

Remember, each member of your group must complete his/her individual assigned role. That role must be research about one of the five broad areas: education, lynching, suffrage, segregation, and mob violence. Then you must identify the problem(s) or complaint(s) in your specific area by reading through the primary sources. Lastly you need to write a report of your findings with a solution to the problem(s) or complaint(s).

Within your group, you need to share and discuss your findings with other group members and as a group produce one written report which must be presented to the entire class. Each group member must orally present a part of that written report.

The oral presentation must be delivered:

- clearly and loudly
- at an appropriate pace (rate)
- with sufficient eye contact
- with gesture
- with an erect posture
- with enthusiasm

Evaluation

The qualilty of your written and oral report will be based on the following:

- Research/Analysis
- Organization
- Language
- Stylistic Technique
- Delivery
- Overall Effectiveness

- Thesis Statement
- Topic Sentence
- Detail Sentences
- Commentary Sentences
- Concluding Sentences
- Spelling
- Sentence Syntax

Conclusion

The post Reconstruction South created two separate communities: one black, one white. The forced control of blacks in many southern communities relegated them to the status of second class citizens throughout the South. The legacy of such treatment meant, for the most part, that in the twentieth century most blacks would be relegated to the status of a forced inferior position in the South and much of the Nation as well. What conditions of post Reconstruction South led to political, social, and economic changes in the latter half of the twentieth century? Have African Americans made social, political, and economic progress since the post Reconstruction South? What do you think about this progress in light of new civil rights struggles?

Reflections

Individually, answer three of the following questions. All reflections should be at least five or more sentences.

1. We are at the door of the 21st century, have the legacy of the nineteenth century problems of racism, sexism, and discrimination been solved?

2. What do you predict will be some new challenges for African Americans as they enter the 21st century?

3. Do you think the nation can solve these problems of inequality and move on in the development of a color-blind society?

4. What do you think about these problems American faced at the turn of the century?

5. Which group(s) has/have responsibility for solving these problems?

Teacher Notes

Grade Level/Unit:

- Grade 8: Reconstruction of the South
- Grade 11: Civil Rights Movement (review unit)

H/SS Content Standards

8.11 Students analyze the character and lasting consequences of Reconstruction, in terms of:

1.the original aims of Reconstruction and the effects on the political and social structure of different regions

2.the push-pull factors in the movement of former slaves to the cities in the North and to the West, and their differing experiences in those regions (e.g. the experiences of Buffalo Soldiers)

3.the effects of the Freedman's Bureau and the restrictions on the rights and opportunities of freedman, including racial segregation and "Jim Crow" laws

4.the rise and effects of the Ku Klux Klan

5.the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth amendments to the Constitution, and their connection to Reconstruction

Historical and Social Science Analysis Grades 6-8

Chronological and Spatial Thinking

1.students explain how major events are related to each other in time

2.students construct various timelines of key events, people, and periods of the historical era being studied Historical Interpretation

1.students explain the central issues and problems of the past, placing people and events in a matrix of time and place

2.students understand and distinguish cause, effect, sequence, and correlation in historical events, including the long- and short-term causal relations

3.students explain the sources of historical continuity and how the combination of ideas and events explains the emergence of new patterns

4.students recognize the role of chance, oversight, and error in history

5.students recognize interpretations of history are subject to change as new information is uncovered

Lesson Purpose: The students are expected to learn about the forces that led to the development of a segregated and unequal society and its effect on African Americans in the 19th and 20th century in the areas of social and political mobility.

Goals: The student will learn about the culture of the post Reconstruction South, determine how to improve southern society as a basis for bringing about equality throughout the nation, and understand why it is important for a democratic society to protect the civil rights of all Americans.

Information Literacy:

(1) Students use problem-solving skills to write a report addressing the specific problems of inequality in the South between the two dominant racial groups. (2) Students search various links for relevant sources to perform their specific task.(3) Students learn to synthesize information for a written an oral presentation. (4) Students learn the effectiveness of working together to produce a written presentation and an oral presentation. (5) Students recognize point of view from a number of sources. (6) Students learn how to distinguish fact from opinion.

Length of Time: Four 45-50 minutes class periods

Resources needed: In addition to those electronic materials listed under the following print materials would be of value:

Remembering Slavery Edited by I. Berlin,

M. Faureaud S. Miller. Ny: New Press and

Library of Congress, 1998

Classic Slave Narritives

edited by H.L. Gates jr., Ny: Mentor Books. 1987

Reconstruction and Reform. Joy Hakin

Ny: Oxford Press, 1994 (Part of the History of US series)

Bullowship Days: The Slave Remembers edited by J. Mellon

Ny: Avon Books, 1988

Black Americans: A History in Their Own Words, edited by Milton Meltzer.

Ny: Harper Collins, 1984

Lesson sequence: See sections on **task and process**.

Interdisciplinary connection: Language Arts (writing and speaking skills)

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